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THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

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A THEIST'S IMPRESSIONS OF JUDAISM.

I. A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF RELIGION.

THERE is triteness—and such secure truth as commonly accompanies triteness—in the statement that the world owes Art to the Greeks, Law to the Romans, and Religion to the Hebrews. Inasmuch as Religion is the heart of life and closely concerned with Politics, Social Economics, and the nobler inspirations of Art, we may safely affirm, with Arnold, that the Revelation moving the world to-day is neither Greece's nor Rome's—but Judaea's.

This could not be so, however, but for the fact that the Jew, by reason of a unique racial experience, and special subtlety and tenacity of spiritual insight, has, during the long ages, evolved out of his deepest consciousness, stating them with consummate power, certain grand primary principles of faith, fitted for the acceptance of all mankind. The secret lay in the principles themselves, a masterly and compelling way of proclaiming them, and—of not least importance—their backing up in practical life. “A three-fold cord is not quickly broken”: by this cord have the nations been drawn to Israel to sit at his feet for instruction.

The principles themselves (easily separable from the intricate system of ceremonial that gathered around them)

were always of the utmost simplicity, going down to the very roots of things in religion :—

(1) The One Eternal, Lord and Giver of life, Source and Controller of the Universe—perfectly wise, good, and loving ;

(2) The possibility, the reality of intimate personal relations between him and us ;

(3) Moral Law accepted and revered as the expression of his will, obedience to it bringing bliss to the soul ; and—

(4) A well-grounded hope of life after death, according to God's appointment.

These together with—as a corollary—the profound conviction of Israel's special mission, form the entire creed in its primary elements.

As to its mode of presentation, that, although conditioned by some restrictions of nationality, was on the same large lines as the splendid belief itself. Dramatic intensity of prophetic vision, passionate keenness of saintly intuition, overpowering sincerity and almost superhuman expression of rapturous trust by psalmist after psalmist, have given to their mighty message a force, a conquering certainty, and withal a “bare, sheer, penetrating power” which has made it sink into the hearts of all the myriads “of all kindreds and tongues” unto whom it has come—and fixed it there immovably !

And what of the witness borne by Israel, in his corporate life, to the efficacy of his faith in lifting his children to high moral levels, and sustaining them there ?

For answer we need only point to Israel's heroic martyr-history of three thousand years and more ; nobly indeed has Israel shown how his faith *works* in the practical life—in the fight against evil, in the persistent struggle after virtue !

Thus, then, it comes to pass that, in spite of numberless national failures and disasters, Israel's grand creed, *in its*

broad essentials, has won, is winning, and ever must win the homage and assent of mankind—and this by the just, loving providence of God.

The ancient Jewish Teachers still form the Legislative Council of religion, so to speak, for all men and women who believe in God. The very *ground-plan* of a synagogue interior suggests an assembly of legislators, while the individual Jew seems in a mutely eloquent way to *personalize* religion to the regardless world.

Hebrew Theism, then, is the fountain source, first of all of current Judaism, and through that its waters have flowed on, spreading far and wide, and beneficently watering the Gentile creeds of Islam and Christ. True it is, indeed, that these last two have muddied the stream by alien deposits. Yet they survive, and usefully survive, and *because of the purer Jewish element*—for it is from that perennial stream that they draw their life, and the measure of health and vigour they display.

Israel's hands are stretched out still in benediction, and Isaiah's glowing words carry a vaster meaning than he knew: "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit." Fulfilment is coming by the dispersion of Jews all over the globe—that bitter experience! An enforced dedication of themselves to "unpath'd waters, undream'd shores" has been the means whereby those precious words and thoughts of Israel have been scattered broadcast among mankind.

"Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,

As the water follows the moon, silently with fluid steps
anywhere round the globe."

So sings Walt Whitman.

Israel *has* spoken "in the right voice," he has given eternal speech and utterance to man's deepest yearnings and aspirations after righteousness and God—the heart of the world has followed him!

II. THE JEWISH DOCTRINE OF GOD.

If the character and worth of a religious system may be best seen in, and tested by, its doctrine of God, none can deny to Judaism a supreme position among the Theistic creeds.

Consider the case of the three other principal competing Faiths. Christianity has indefinitely complicated the idea by its Trinity, and degraded it by its ingenious but objectionable Salvation scheme.

The ancient Zoroastrian belief—so noble in many ways—has detracted from the sole and unapproachable majesty of the Supreme One by its theory of dualism.

Islam, alas! notwithstanding much in the Koran that is noble and impressive—for which elements, by the way, it is largely indebted to Israel—has put forward, as a general conception of the Deity therein unfolded, that of an isolated Potentate, prone to favouritism, open to flattery, unsympathetic, and grossly tyrannical.

As against these, and such like, imperfections and distortions of the central truth and dominating fact of religion, the Jewish doctrine stands forth in unapproachable sublimity. Its conception of God, disclosed in the hymns of the psalmists and the rhapsodies of the prophets, and indeed in thousands of passages, liberally scattered over the pages of the Old Testament, is one that almost perfectly satisfies the demands of the reason, conscience, and heart—arbiters of all creeds!

In the first place, and above all else, it is simple and unmetaphysical, the chief note of which simplicity is the tremendous stress laid upon the Divine Unity. Upon this grand truth the insistence is passionate and even fierce: it is as though the writers had foreseen the endless confusions of the Christian Trinity, and were determined to leave the theologians of the Church without excuse for their needless and tangling corruptions.

Running parallel with this majestic truth, proclaimed

with such force and solemnity, is an almost complete absence of futile and insane attempts—frequent in less reverent religions—to enclose the Illimitable God in a finely spun metaphysical net, to define his Being and attributes with scientific exactitude. The best Jewish teachers have been incapable of such folly. They studiously avoid abstract terms. It is true that there is considerable crude anthropomorphism in the earlier Bible books, but that is greatly to be preferred to the verbal jugglery of later times, which, far from attaining its presumed object of helping to bring God near to the waiting soul as a personal Reality in closeness of companionship, actually does the very opposite, causing Him to fade far away and dissolve in a haze of abstractions.

But the psalmists and prophets, while exhausting the resources of language in describing God, as in so many ways he became known to them through his works in the world without and the world within, did not seek to strangle the living Idea by subtle disquisitions upon his nature. Their language, indeed, was of the most glowing sort; but, although they never shrank from speaking of his relations with them in terms drawn from highest human experience, they knew all the while—and we know too—that this speech of theirs was but poetical, allegorical, and emblematic; and they constantly confessed its utter inadequacy to the mighty theme.

Further; not only is the Jewish conception of God of extreme simplicity: it also rigidly preserves and guards our innate conviction of the infinite distance, the eternal distinction between him and us. Tendencies exist at the present time to efface this distinction; unregulated speculation mixes up the Divine with the human, the Creator with the creature. It is taught, in effect, that the difference between God and man is one of *degree* only, not of kind. Now, Judaism is saved from such impiety by the very vividness of its consciousness of God. She insists that this infinite gulf can never be bridged; that the restrictions and

limitations of man cannot be assumed by, or predicated of, the Ruler and Lord of the Universe; and that to try to obliterate the everlasting line of division is to strike at the root of all spiritual religion.

A third characteristic of Israel's apprehension of God—of profound significance for personal piety—is the emphatic affirmation and most intimate realization of the *nearness* of God. Man cannot escape, so Judaism insists, from that All-encompassing Presence enfolding him in its gracious embrace. He may walk with God as friend with Friend, for the great incomprehensible “King of the Universe” is also his tender Father, his hidden Comforter. The deep peace and joy of this sacred Communion of loving trust need never be disturbed, nor the daily converse of child with Parent interrupted, while even sin, though a breaking off *on the part of man* of these holy relations, can never alienate God, or change his goodwill, inflexible in its constancy, into anything else. Nay, even though we should make our bed in a hell of wicked desires and bad deeds, he is still there, eager to respond to the smallest whisper of longing after recovery and for a surrendered holiness. Holding us, in life and death, in his hands, we can never stray beyond his care, control, and love.

Such are some leading features in the Jewish faith about God.

III. THE ATTITUDE OF JUDAISM TOWARDS THE ASCETIC IDEAL.

Let us not always say,
 “Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!”
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, “All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!”

It is with singular appropriateness that Browning puts this lofty utterance into the mouth of his Rabbi Ben Ezra,

for of all the great *originating* creeds, Judaism is the least ascetic, the least tainted by that appalling *natural* heresy which teaches that it is by insults to the body that we best please its Creator.

There may be said to be three chief ways—implying practical moral results—of regarding the flesh: as a master to be incessantly served and indulged; as a slave fit only to be tortured and thrashed into dead and worthless subjection; as a co-worker with the soul in its progressive redemption.

The last—the sound, courageous, and honourable view—is the one consistently taken by Jewish teachers. And not only is it the wisest attitude, but the *only* one which adequately recognizes the worth of both soul and body. To go back to our Browning text, the true doctrine is this: that the flesh must help the soul as much as the soul the flesh.

Long ago, the Rabbins saw and felt this truth, nor have they ever really swerved from a line of sanctified common sense in their treatment of the vital subject.

Let us hear what they say. “In the hereafter,” declares one, “every man will be called to account for the earthly pleasures he has rejected.” “The worldly pleasures,” says Luzatto, “which a man needs not, it is his duty to eschew; but those which for one reason or another he does need, he cannot renounce without sin. This is the safe rule.” “Defraud not thyself,” we read in Ecclesiasticus, “of a good day; and let not the portion of a good desire pass thee by.”

The body and soul are not distinct entities, cut off the one from the other. The body is the means whereby our virtues “go forth of us,” the instrument whereby we extend ourselves to others, to help and bless them. It is to be honoured on that account. Judaism has no sympathy with cloistral virtues, sham and mock chastities of the monkish cell. Says Froude, “The animal and the spiritual are not contradictions; they are the complements to the

perfect character." Purity, worthy of that name, cannot be attained by any maiming of the physical nature, but rather by a *worthy* temperate use of its varied desires. The right satisfaction of them—in eating, drinking, or what not—is as much a fulfilment of the Will of God as saying one's prayers.

"It is as great a duty," says Richard Baxter, "to help the body to its due alacrity and fitness for service as it is to tame it and bring it under." Jewish teachers would have us remember that the primary object of all religion is the development and sanctification of the *whole* man. The flesh is designed to be a veritable ministrant to the soul's cleansing, a means of its liberation from sensualisms: a hard saying to some. *Effective* purity is attained through regulation of the physical appetites, not by their *entire* and rigid suppression. By the first method we gain real positive virtue; by the second nothing but a fictitious, negative semblance of the same. The designs of the Eternal take in things physical as well as spiritual. Hence, scornful treatment of the body tends to mar gravely the harmony of his great plan. Judaism never looks askance at marriage, nor speaks of it—(as an inferior creed does)—in terms of half-disparagement, just permitting it as a compromise, the lesser of two evils. With Richard Jefferies, it holds that "Fulness of physical life causes a deeper desire of soul-life."

Such—if I have rightly interpreted them—have been the leading principles of the masters in Israel, when they dealt, as they often did, with this problem in fundamentals. Herein they are both sane and scientific; religious, too, in the deepest sense, for perfect health and perfect holiness presuppose and involve each other. Thus, they avoid, on the one hand, the desperate follies of a false and *perverted* chastity, and, on the other, the degrading license of a manicheism which, holding the body in contemptuous abhorrence as but a "muddy vesture of decay," cared little or nothing to what base uses it might be put, and the

preposterous hedonism which, on different grounds, has ever smilingly sanctioned, or at least winked at, similar outrages upon the essential holiness of sex-relationship. The Jew has always displayed a passion for truth—truth in *outward* as well as in inward things. Living in the light of *facts*, he has respected all that makes him man, “of a reasonable soul *and* human flesh subsisting”; he has treated himself with entire candour and veracity; he has scrupled to call that “common or unclean” which carries out law, expresses personality, and develops the potences of the nature while preserving its integrity. Consequently, his attitude towards the physical realities has been thoroughly sound and open-minded, accepting, with reverence, the conditions, and discharging the responsibilities of the dual alliance of flesh and spirit. But, upon the *regulation* of these lesser matters, as well as those weightier ones held to be more distinctively spiritual, Judaism has bestowed the most absorbing labour. The records of this anxious forethought, this minute care, remain to this day for the guidance of her children, in the intricate system of Levitical law and Talmudic precepts—not forgetting the enforcement of that ancient ceremony of Initiation, which cannot fail to powerfully impress the minds of each generation with an abiding sense of the intimate concern of faith with the requirements and the prosperity of the body. The writings of the mediaeval Sages bear equally eloquent testimony to the same preoccupation.

By every means available then, Judaism has set herself to hallow the relationships entered into and the duties imposed upon man in connexion with his physical constitution.

Loyally accepting the facts, this magnificent Religion, taking a comprehensive view of her vast refining task, lays her hand upon the *whole* of life. She extends her dominion over flesh and spirit. The one is God’s as much as the other; and he means them to be redeemed together.

By spreading her consecrating hands over both, she aims at instituting and maintaining a perfect harmony in their *joint* affairs; at infusing sacramental dignity into all departments of the body's activity; and, by bringing the normal propensities under imperative constraints, at giving them free play in right directions, and under worthy circumstances—completing and ennobling them by dedication to lofty ends.

Results show how large a measure of success has been hers. Ethnological characteristics alone, though they have doubtless played a part, fail to fully explain the relatively higher degree of chastity reached by the Hebrew race in comparison with others. As set forth above, the two factors more directly conducing to that result have been: (1) frank recognition of the existence of instincts shared by humanity in common with the rest of the animal world, and of the resultant obligations; (2) wise and farseeing provisions for the government of those instincts, so as, while allowing them all *due* exercise, to bring them into accord with reason, and train them into obedience to the promptings and aspirations of the higher nature that is ever spurring men on to rise on stepping-stones of their *living* selves, and climb the heights of virtue to God!

IV. THE LITURGY OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

What most strikes a stranger, present for the first time at a Synagogue service—after his initial surprise at the plan of the building, with its seats distributed around the central almemor—is the strange weirdness of the Liturgy, chanted with a curious swaying pendulum-like motion, peculiarly suggestive of those alternations of joy and sorrow, exultation and self-abasement, passionate pleading and ineffable repose, which are specially characteristic of the Hebrew Prayer Books.

Now, it is an arid monotony of long and minute legal enactments; anon, the recital is broken by piercing lyric cries of yearning. This, again, swiftly modulates into

a major key, in which is trumpeted forth, with triumphant assertiveness, some dominating certitude of faith. Thereafter follows, in broken accents of entreaty, confession of sin, merging at length in an exalted song of praise that would rend the very heavens!

The imaginative and impressionable hearer will not be worrying himself here with verbal details: he finds a meaning in it all deeper than words. In *Daniel Deronda* George Eliot has sympathetically described this effect, often so transcendent, in the rapt communion which it induces.

However, let our supposed stranger, whose interest has been by these means stimulated, betake himself to the serious study of the Liturgy itself. He will then be still more impressed. Like some traveller who has lost his way in a forest of tropical luxuriance of vegetation, the student is bewildered and amazed by the unequalled richness and variety of the literature he is about to explore. He seeks a friendly guide; but sign-posts are few, and all paths obliterated. To vary the metaphor, there appears to be no design in the composition, little sense of order, no central culminating point, scant feeling for proportion, no just estimation of values, no salient features—nothing, in short, by which he may get a grip of the thing! an inextricable confusion; a prodigious tangle!

But the confusion is not so badly confounded after all, presupposing that sympathy and respectful attention are exercised. The student will then gradually discern more and more of order *within* the chaos, and will find that, in common with all human productions, this noble volume is explainable and explicable without very great difficulty in accordance with the genius of the people to whom it owes its origin. For the Jewish Prayer Book is what it is because its compilers and contributors were *what they were*. Its pages completely exhibit well-marked features of Jewish character.

For example: the Israelite is intrepid in adventure, independent and inquisitive in research; in his Liturgy, accordingly, he goes off at tangents without any warning, to explore on his own lines, and little hindered by traditional restraints—trusting to his acute brethren to follow carelessly dropped clues. He is also highly imaginative, and the Liturgy displays an exuberance of spiritual fancy. He is a lover of argument; and in the services for worship he breaks out, upon favourable opportunity, into lengthy passages of dialectics. His emotional constitution is liable to swift alternations of joy and grief; and this characteristic appears over and over again in his prayers. He is gifted with powers of intense and prolonged concentration; hence, as we should expect, the words of the Liturgy, from beginning to end, circle around the one mighty topic of God's relation to man—are, indeed, but variations upon that transcendent theme. His dramatic instincts—not always free from excitability—are abnormally developed; and no one can attend a Synagogue during the final service of the Day of Atonement without feeling that he is witnessing a *Drama* of stupendous proportions in the acting!

Such are some of the characteristics of the Jew vividly displayed in the Liturgy.

Moreover, qualities happily absent from the Book are just as strikingly significant of qualities that he lacks. There is little or no morbidity, nothing painfully lachrymose, no whining and cringing as of a beaten hound at the feet of a tyrant master. Compare, for instance, the misery, gloom, and introspection surrounding requiem and funeral services among the Christians, and the attendant terror of post-mortem hell-fire lurking in the background, with the chastened, dignified sobriety of the Hebrew prayer for the dying, and the healthy cheerful manliness of the mourner's Kaddish.

Again, there is most refreshing silence in regard to life-conditions after death: a native reticence and reverence for knowledge based upon facts make the Jew shrink

from describing "the undiscovered country" with the fullness and accuracy of a geographical textbook, and from cataloguing its inhabitants as a naturalist might the fauna and flora of Kent! Neither is there any spiteful condemnation of the followers of other faiths: the Jew is singularly free from narrow intolerance. Nor insistence upon magical charms to bring peace to the soul: the Jew has no taste or turn for necromancy. Nor cravings after roundabout contrivances for mediation: the Jew long ago got rid of his Messianic fascination.

The half-dozen or so great Liturgies of the world were built up by self-respecting religions in forward-looking anticipation of their permanence. Not leaving the destiny of the creed to haphazard, founders or disciples adopted the best conceivable (human) means for securing perpetuance, by conserving the precious deposit of truth in the protective garment of language. History proves the wisdom of such a provision. Further—and this suggests an exceedingly interesting branch of inquiry—inasmuch as all Liturgies are offsprings of the human heart, there must needs be many similarities in structure and thought, as well as dissimilarities and contrasts amongst them. A hymn of the Rig-veda may have analogues or counterparts in the Roman Breviary, while the Jewish Prayer Book also expresses feelings and aspirations which meet us again (in less lofty forms) inscribed upon Egyptian papyrus or graven upon Babylonian clay-tablet!

But, for purposes of instructive comparison, the Roman Catholic Liturgy is the one of all others which it would be most worth while considering closely side by side with the Jewish.

We can do no more now than indicate a few likenesses and contrasts (involving principles and leading to results) in these two prominent Prayer Books.

Both use supplication, praise and song, versicles and responses. Creed recitations, too, figure in both, though the Jewish Thirteen Principles are simplicity itself com-

pared with the distressing metaphysical complications of the Symbols of Christianity. Lessons, also, are common to both: the Synagogue service making room for the "Ethics of the Fathers," and portions of the Mishnah, in addition to the Pentateuch, &c.; while the Breviary finds a place for selections from the writings of the Church Fathers as supplementary to the short passages of Scripture. The Psalms, however, form the only real bond of union, for they are largely drawn upon in each case.

The *structure* of the two Liturgies marks a significant contrast: Romanism being, before all else, a forensic faith with a passion for organization, laying tremendous stress upon formularized services, has bestowed the utmost pains in bringing the materials for her Liturgy into careful and orderly arrangement and symmetrical shape under settled rules; Judaism, on the other hand, is far less troubled by considerations of this kind, content to let much of the matter arrange itself. The Catholic Church authorities, again, were scrupulously particular in sifting liturgical matter, admitting only what came up to the required standard, fitted into the schemes of the different offices, and was sanctioned by the congregation appointed to preside over the rites, while the Jewish Rabbins were inclined to open wide the door of admittance into the Liturgy, and to grant hospitality to wellnigh anything that was religious and Jewish.

They welcomed contributions from all sides, and exercised but little selective discrimination—which partly accounts for the curiously heterogeneous character of the present Prayer Book, containing, as it does, besides elements naturally to be expected therein, a strange mass of ceremonial enactments, and ethical disquisitions—casuistical or otherwise, treasured up by oral tradition or developed by Talmudic subtlety. Nor are maxims of acute worldly wisdom excluded from its pages.

It is true the two Liturgies grew up in much the same way—gradually, around a simple nucleus. That nucleus,

in the case of the Roman Missal, was composed of the major part of the Preface and Canon, to which additions were made during four or five centuries. Development then practically stopped.

The Jewish Prayer Book, likewise, started from humble beginnings: the Shemang, the Amidah and Pentateuchal or Prophetical readings. These ingredients were gradually added to as time went on, the additions consisting chiefly of Psalms, Prayers, and the poetical Piyutim. Some of these later incorporations received only local sanction, but they all swelled the Liturgy to a size that an outsider may be permitted to consider disproportionate to the needs of the community.

When, now, we come to view these Liturgies purely as religious documents, and to weigh their value as devotional classics, the incomparable superiority of the Jewish convincingly appears; and chiefly so, because Judaism is a broad, human, common-sense faith, rationally satisfying, insisting upon three or four simple verifiable primary doctrines only of which the conscience approves, and which the heart takes home to its comfort. Instead, then, of prayers and hymns embodying impossible metaphysics and laboriously setting forth clumsy salvation projects, instead of whining petitions to three Gods, the mother of one, and hierarchies of saints, instead of tortuous and ridiculous contrivances to appease non-existent wrath, the Jewish Liturgy occupies its pages with the One Eternal Lord, holds ever true, confident and direct speech with him, exhausts the resources of language in songs of praise, in utterances of loving gratitude, in rejoicings at his nearness, in *natural* outpourings of grief for sin;—never so much as a dream of intercessors or hidings from his blessed punishments; and, withal, such a sweet sense of the divine accessibility every moment to each sinful, suffering child of earth.

Where shall one find a hymn of universal faith like the "Adon Olām," of mystical beauty like the Hymn of Glory;

or services so solemn, touching, and tender as those appointed for Yom Kippur; or prayers so gracious and so fragrant with ingenuous piety as make up the various family offices prescribed for the faithful Israelite, exquisitely and wondrously linking his religion with the sanctities of his home life.

Certainly the Jew has cause to thank God, and the fathers before him, for the noblest Liturgy the annals of faith can show.

But infallibility does not reside in the things of men; and he is no true friend who would claim perfection for this unique Prayer Book, who would minimize its drawbacks, or explain out of existence its occasional puerilities and superstitions. Manifestly, it does express thoughts and sentiments whose interest to modern minds can scarcely be more than archaeological—to refined sensibilities perhaps an offence, in that they give voice to theological conceptions that have passed away, or embalm rites and ceremonies which, having become emptied of meaning, are obsolete. Should the *dead* branches be lopped off, need there be consternation?

Old orders change, yielding place to new. There is progress unceasing in the knowledge of divine things; God is pouring inspiration into every loyal son of his, and the generations, as they succeed, discern more clearly to correct the incidental errors that hamper the freer circulation of holy truth.

Reformers in Jewry have already begun this task, in all reverence, in the fear of God, and in utmost veneration of the infinitely sacred, indestructible certitudes of their faith—those majestic elemental affirmations of God, Duty, Immortality, and Israel's Mission upon which the Service Book so passionately insists—wherein, indeed, the Theism of a race becomes the Theism of mankind.

So, after all deductions are made that the more liberal and advancing schools demand, there are left in this greatest of Liturgies a goodly store of prayers, hymns, and psalms,

treasured and treasurable as the unspeakably precious memorial utterances of a faith old, yet eternally young; a faith that shall outlast the ages, whose glory the gathering years cannot tarnish—whose light shall lighten the Gentiles until the end of time!

V. THE PARADOX OF JEWISH CHARACTER.

Two apparently antagonistic forces are detected actively moulding the character of the Jew as a racial product. One of these forces tends to accentuate and enlarge his religious genius; the other to foster and consolidate those calculating commercial capacities which distinguish him among his fellow men.

The unobservant Gentile will usually lay stress upon the driving-a-hard-bargain instinct as the determining constituent in the Israelite's composite make-up. Yet that is a short-sighted judgment: it mistakes a *prominent* characteristic for a leading one. The more permanent feature—because the more fundamental and deeper rooted in his nature, burnt into it by the sacred memory of a wonderful past with its agonies of contempt and renunciation—is his unique passion for religion which has set its broad seal upon the thought of the world. Nevertheless, these two determining traits of character—alert, adventurous spirituality, and adroit commercial genius—to all appearances so conflicting, so conspicuous as to have become proverbial qualities of the race, at work side by side in the same individual, modify and interact upon each other. Their blending in personalities has involved large consequences for the community as a whole: a matter that deserves to be considered attentively.

On the one hand, acuteness in practical affairs preserves the religious emotions from degenerating into limp sentimentality or profitless mysticism, at the same time communicating to them tenacity, grasp of fact, a methodical basis, and a clearness of outline. On the other hand, the Jew's instinctive piety, permeating his nature, fre-

quently becomes a saving grace, so influencing him in his money-getting pursuits, and in driving his bargains, as to make him profoundly conscious of the moral obligations of integrity, trustworthiness, justice, and honour.

Not that such an equilibrium is consistently maintained. It never is; human character being the net consequent of opposing forces whose operation is rarely arrested—the resultant of constant displacements. Processes of waste and repair continually modify and transform the spiritual organism. Still, beneath these changes, the type persists, individuals tending more or less to conform to it.

So with the Jew. His type is recognizable all down the centuries; his character ever presents those two sides to puzzled observers. At one period of his history he seems to be occupied exclusively with religion—"God-intoxicated," as was said of Spinoza; at another time, thought and energy are so fiercely devoted to gain-getting that it is hard enough to discover any qualities fitting him for exercises and pursuits loftier than the chatter of the market-place or the babel of the bourse. Very mystifying, no doubt—like everything Jewish! The Jew is to this day the standing exception to all rules, the despair of system makers whose surveys are bounded by the merely *scientific* horizon. Close study, however, helps to clear up the anomaly by setting it in a proper perspective.

It is religion that has always been first and foremost with the Israelite. By its aid he became a nation; he has remained a distinct people ever since, under the abiding, compelling pressure of its laws.

Far from its being an accident in his corporate existence, it is surely its very life-blood. It bestowed upon him an almost miraculous intensity of individualism; apart from it, the community would have been merged fifty times over in alien civilizations. Because of it, he has been able to stand against numberless insidious inducements—economic and other—to assimilate. In the strength of it, this small body, politically an entirely negligible quantity,

has again and again swept back the mightiest national forces of modern times, seeking to submerge and absorb it. The amazing vigour and racial separateness of the Jew, he owes—if not exclusively, yet primarily, to overmastering religious impulses, the like of which the world has never seen exhibited elsewhere.

Accordingly, under whatsoever government he lives, he jealously guards his distinctness, remaining a unique compact unit in solitary solidarity. Then what is to be said of that other quality which has given the Jew so commanding a position in trade and finance, except that, powerful though it be, it is altogether secondary. True, it is a distinguishing feature that perpetually thrusts itself—unpleasantly enough, let us allow—upon our notice. For all that, it is a subordinate one; while, in spite of the offensiveness of this hard, competitive keenness in commerce with the worldly spirit which, when unduly exercised, it needs must generate to the grave detriment of the higher functions, it rarely seems to fatally imperil these last, or to dry up the fountains of spiritual life.

The fact is, the Jew keeps the rabble of the world in the *outer* courts of his temple, preserving its holy places inviolate from intrusion. Not that he can always secure such aloofness and privacy for the soul; and when there is failure, the corruption of so generously, prodigally endowed a nature is appalling: "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds." That he is so generally successful, however, in averting a calamity of this kind, by holding in stern check the attacks of the disastrous secularizing foes, testifies eloquently to the immense virility of that religious instinct which forms the groundwork of his multiform character, its dominating faculty.

The unlovely side of him, showing most to his fellows, must be considered, to a great extent, the creation of circumstances—a something, that is, more or less artificially grafted upon him by a persecuting, narrowing environment of centuries.

Socially ostracized, harried about, tormented by cruelties in the States under whose jurisdiction he dwelt as but a pilgrim and sojourner, he was compelled to adapt himself and his conduct to the gallingly unjust conditions under which he was barely tolerated. Thereupon, he set his wits to work to live as best he could, denied, as he was, all rights of citizenship, and knowing that the ordinary channels of healthy and normal self-expression, open to recognized members of the body politic, were irrevocably closed to him. The hated Jew would have been much more than human if this hardest of hard treatment had not also stimulated in his breast a thirst for retaliation; and he found, at once the means of livelihood and the way to this retaliation, in that keen acquisitiveness which the years have hardened into settled habit.

In an ultimate analysis it may well be that these two qualities, at the anomaly of the co-existence of which men have always wondered, become swallowed up and resolved in a large radical quality, viz. an extraordinary *aliveness* [no other word will serve] of the entire being, from which proceed a fine sensitiveness of intellectual tissue, a stubbornness of will, and an unprecedentedly high development of spiritual perception united with powers of adaptation quite without parallel.

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